

**REMARKS**

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action dated December 30, 2003 (Paper No. 112). A Petition to Extend the Time for Response to this Non-Final Action to Within the First Extended Month accompanies this submission. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

**Rejection of claim 3, amendment of claims 4 to 6, and retention of claims 7 to 15**

In the non-final pending Action, claims 3 to 15 were pending for reconsideration. Claims 7 to 15 were allowed. Claim 3 was rejected. Claims 4 to 6 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to include the subject matter of their base claim 3 and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 3 is canceled, and its subject matter included in each of claims 4, 5, and 6 that had depended on claim 3. Now, each of claims 4 to 6 is rewritten into independent form. Claims 7 to 15 are retained unamended.

Thus, claims 4 to 15 as now pending are in condition for allowance, and early notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

**Priority**

It is noted with appreciation that the Action includes an acknowledgment of a certified copy of the claim for priority.

**Information Disclosure Statement Acknowledgments**

It is also noted with appreciation that the Action was accompanied by initialed IDS Forms PTO-1449 showing consideration of the information provided in papers 4 and 10.

If any further matters remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt consideration.

Dated: April 16, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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